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Some Rough Notes

on

A Reconnaissance Pilot Study in Psychological Susceptibilities
and Experience in Producing It

by

D/IP, O/RR

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These rough and hasty notes were made at the request of Mr. W. J. Ruggles
of the Department of State to whom the responsibilities for country studies
have been assigned by CIA.

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Prefatory Suggestions

To aid in selective reference to the material in these rough notes, the following comments may be useful. The subject matter and Table of Contents are arranged primarily for the person acquainted with the theoretical framework back of the Chile study as well as with the study itself. If, however, the reader's interest is primarily the immediate practical one of getting hints for prosecuting or coaching a country study, he should give special attention to Parts III (and IV). If he is employing the "Specifications" and wishes to note the way in which the Chile study diverges from stipulations therein, he will center upon Part II. Part I, we suspect, will mean most to the administrator and the director of such studies accustomed to "intelligence" jargon and distinctions in intelligence duties. As there has not been sufficient time to integrate the various parts of these notes closely, it will probably be well for any reader to scan them as a whole before concentrating on any one part.

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SOME ROUGH NOTES

on

A RECONNAISSANCE PILOT STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSCEPTIBILITIES*
AND EXPERIENCE IN PRODUCING IT

I. ONE ASPECT OF "PSYCHOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE"

In the interests of relating this type of study to other types in the intelligence, informational, and psychological-warfare fields, it is essential to understand precisely what this reconnaissance pilot study is. Those who made the comprehensive requests for country studies — for which this study was considered a pilot — asked for "psychological vulnerabilities" in one instance, and "psychological factors that can be used as a basis for psychological-warfare planning" in the other. Recognizing that there were and are differences of opinion as to what the quoted statements meant and entailed, the immediate question is, Now that one experimental reconnaissance study has been completed, what is it? and, How does it fit in with other psychological and social science fields on the one hand, and other types of so-called intelligence on the other?

A. A Distinct Type of "Psychological Intelligence"

A firsthand examination of the reconnaissance pilot study shows that on the whole it seems to be a distinct type of psychological intelligence,

* Via, "Reconnaissance Study of Chile's Psychological Susceptibilities to Psychological Warfare," to be published in spring of 1951, produced in accordance with the draft "Specifications for Country-by-Country Studies in Physical and Psychological Accessibility to Psychological Warfare," of 9 August 1950 (Secret), CIA.

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particularly in its treatment of its "direct" or immediate "susceptibility situations."

1. Theoretical View of the Product of the Study

In essence the product of the study is the packet of susceptibility situations, and the core of each of those situations is some immediately functioning (individual- or) group-psychological reaction. That reaction may be a psychological state (such as frustration or conflict), a particular emotion, a want or interest, a sentiment or attitude, a conception, opinion, belief or conviction, or a combination of them.

In interpreting this collection of group-reaction cores and the complexes developed about them or upon them, certain things should be noted:-

a. The group-reactions are immediate, present, current.

—To some analysts, this means they are a part of "current intelligence."

b. The reactions obviously do not take place in isolation from political, economic, sociological, and other psychological phenomena. They are reactions with respect to such phenomena. A knowledge of these psychological group-reactions therefore implies and requires concrete knowledge of such political, economic, sociological and other psychological phenomena.

(Yet see 2 below (I-A-2))

c. Just as political, economic, sociological, and other psychological intelligence may refer either to past, recent, and current events or conditions on the one hand, or to "estimated," predicted, anticipated events or conditions on the other, so

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these psychological group-reactions may be ones which have been operative in the past and are continuing in the present ("current"), or may be projected, imagined, hypothesized for the future. So far as they are the latter, they might be called "estimates" or "estimate intelligence."

This is particularly true in the case of "indirect" or potential susceptibility situations. Those are situations where external circumstances and underlying psychological potentialities are such that awareness of the circumstances (effected through informational or psychological-warfare programs or otherwise) would make given persons or groups presently susceptible. (See e.g., patterns 6 and 7, 14 and 15, in Appendix 5 of draft "Principles for Production of Psychological-Warfare Intelligence," 15 June 1950 (Confidential), or same in draft "Intelligence Production Plan for Support of Psychological-Warfare Planning," 15 June 1950 (Confidential)) As mentioned in Tab A of the "Reconnaissance Study of Chile's Susceptibilities to Psychological Warfare," few of these "indirect" susceptibilities were in the concrete material provided by the Chilean area analysts, though several were added with their assistance and more would undoubtedly emerge in research.

d. It must not be assumed that the so-called susceptible reactions of groups (or persons), whether identified as currently and immediately functioning, or "estimated" as likely to function in a given future situation, constitute all there is to the sphere of psychological intelligence. An examination of them shows that

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they reflect only in part a whole range of sentiments, attitudes, beliefs, etc. deeply laid in the habits and cultures of the people studied, or fleetingly formed and dissolved in some group's experience. It has been intended that so far as deeply laid psychological traits could throw light on current susceptibilities, they should be described prior to and separate from the analyses of susceptibility situations themselves. (See "Specifications," pp. 2, 3, and 4.) Unfortunately, the limitations involved in a reconnaissance study made this impossible. Fundamentally, however, the job of unearthing, identifying, describing and defining these basic psychological traits as a whole constitutes a job in area analysis quite apart from and different from the study of immediately functioning psychological reactions observed to be presently utilizable by psychological warfare. —To some analysts this prior area-analysis job is one in the psychological aspects of "basic intelligence," not "current intelligence." As always, the current is supposed to assume and build upon the basic, but is not to be confused with it.

2. Evidence from Analysts' Realization of a New Aspect

It is sometimes assumed that because, as indicated under b (I-A-1-b) above, the psychological is more or less inevitably bound up with the political, economic, sociological, physical, etc., that therefore the specialists in these spheres of knowledge should absorb the psychological into their specialties. This is especially likely among "current intelligence" analysts and in the field of "estimates." In two

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respects light is thrown upon this confusion by the reconnaissance pilot study under discussion.

a. First, in general the multiplicity of the problems calling for psychological contrast and comparison, discrimination and differentiation, definition, and interpretation, seem to leave no question in either the ordinary area specialist's mind or the functional (psychological) specialist's mind that the task of analysis here is a professional one. The fact that popularization is necessary in the final product should not obscure the functional nature of the analysis to be made. To the degree that the present reconnaissance study tends to give way to the kind of study in depth which is needed, and hence, in particular, to elaborating "qualifications" of the psychological reactions, the professional nature of the required task is the more obvious.

b. The second respect in which light was thrown on the above confusion, was the way in which the ordinary area analysts received the assignment, took part in it, and learned from it. When, initially, the requesters tried to explain face-to-face what they desired from the area analysts, the latter, after hearing an illustration or two, declared simply that they could not turn it out. They were accustomed to thinking in terms of trends and estimates on matters relating to US security, they said, and this new request called for something entirely different from that. It required a complete reorientation in their thinking. Only gradually, over a considerable period, through raising problems, asking questions, and using illustrations, were these

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situations. After having gone through this coaching process, however, it should be noted, they came to lay out susceptibility chains almost too readily; whereupon the functional director had to center their attention on developing a critical attitude toward different aspects of the analyses. And finally, it might be added, there was marked evidence of the area analysts' continued interest in rounding-out gaps in both material and analyses. To them unquestionably it had become a new aspect of intelligence.

B. A Functional Specialty

Fortunately, experience with area analysts on this project was not confined to those quite innocent of special (functional) psychological training or experience in employing social science methods. In fact, among area specialists who gave some assistance were persons with three further degrees of functional specialization and experience in social science and applied psychology. And on the whole it can be claimed safely and judiciously that these persons' grasp of the essential principles involved and their development of ability to characterize susceptibility situations critically, was in some very real proportion to their prior functional specialization and experience. This is said at this place because it is further realistic evidence that this type of study is a functional specialty.

Of a corroborating nature, also, is the fact that one of the above persons and another with considerable theoretical background but no relevant area experience, became over-confident of their grasp of the general approach and method after initial acquaintance with it; and their further usefulness as assisting functional analysts was in some very direct proportion to their further intensive consideration of the entire theoretical framework provid-

implicit warning and partly to reinforce the suggestion that we are here employing a miniature applied social science or technology. It may be relatively easy with various types of personnel to turn out susceptibility chains of a simple nature resembling those in the Chile study, after the initial idea gets across. But the more intensive the study, the more it will need to be recognized frankly that the theoretical framework in the "Principles" behind the "Specifications," constitutes what might be regarded as a miniature applied social science or technology.

1. An Applied Social Science or Technology

That this functional specialty may be considered an applied social science or technology with special emphasis upon the psychological aspect, should now be apparent. (See I-A-1-b and d above; also "The Methodological Framework for the Country-by-Country Studies in CIA's PW Project, from a Social Science Point of View," June 1950 (Confidential); and draft of "Principles" as a whole.) More abstrusely, this proposition is suggested by such considerations as (1) the configurational concept of a susceptibility situation only parts of which can be categorized; (2) the framework for analysis in terms of categorized factors, of relationships, of qualifications of the factors and relationships, and of conditioning circumstances; (3) the problem of level of immediate or dated group-reaction relationships on the one hand and of causal and contingency relationships on the other (raised in section C under Tab A of the Chile study); (4) the various facets of the problem of the ideational element in psychological susceptibility situations (see especially Appendix 4 on Psychological Determinants in "Principles").

Essential distinctions in the factors, in their relationships, in the

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lead us into substantive and methodological problems of social science. Nevertheless, as hinted above, such social-scientific problems may be minimized in the process of producing a susceptibility study if the study is closely supervised and a functional specialist is fully aware of them.

2. Due to Need of Comparative Studies

In the pressure for mass production of country studies, it is possible that administrators untrained in the social sciences may urge that in view of the difficulty of securing supervision by competent functional specialists thoroughly familiar with the general principles behind the "Specifications," recourse should be had to concrete descriptive accounts of "psychological susceptibilities" after an utter minimum of instructions. The chief difficulty with this is that the studies of the various countries must be comparable. That is necessary both for over-all planning and for regional operational treatment (as in radio broadcasts to a number of countries together). (See III-A below; also page 6 of draft "Specifications.")

C. Functional Competence Here in Relation to other Functional Intelligence Problems

Even though the problem of training and coaching analysts for making partly generalized (instead of merely concrete) country studies is taken up in Part III of this paper, below, it may be helpful to tie it in here with other problems bearing on the difficulty of obtaining competent functional treatment of psychological susceptibilities. Undoubtedly training and coaching personnel is a major aid in achieving such competence. However, there are other important aids. One would be an over-all theoretical

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summary of the end product desired in a country study. This might possibly be injected into the "Specifications." Another is a set of detailed requirements for field collection of psychological susceptibility data, as indicated in Part IV-B below. And still another is the prior drawing together of relevant, prerequisite "basic intelligence" on areas in descriptive and causal terms, to which all analysts making these studies should have access.

1. Assumption (where possible) of Prior Area Analyses in Descriptive and Causal Terms

a. In an earlier paragraph (I-A-1-d), reference was made to the fact that the full range of significant psychological traits deeply laid in the habits and culture of a people, are not all necessarily reflected in the psychological susceptibilities identified in such a study as this. Neither is the full range of fundamental political, economic, and sociological facts, not to speak of other important spheres. However, just as the planner of informational and psychological warfare programs and the operating propagandist must each be assumed to have his own independent access to the area analyst's full range of all such facts about a given people (so far as that is possible and feasible), so the functional specialist must be assumed to have like access to the area analyst's full range of facts. He needs them as background and raw material. Moreover, he needs especially the analysis of causal chains and complexes which the area specialist has discovered and worked out. Only when he has these can the functional analyst do his own particular job.

b. In the present instance there were recognized gaps in

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narrative or description level, with the time, personnel, and material at hand. And there were a great many gaps in the knowledge of causal relationships which might have been helpful to the functional specialist. All this handicaps the adequacy of the study. There will have to be much more specialized "basic intelligence" if studies in depth are to be made along the lines here planned, regardless of when it is done or by whom.

2. No Substitute for Experience or Common Sense

The emphasis thus far has been largely upon the particular and specialized aspects of the study in the psychological susceptibilities of Chilean audiences presumably utilizable through information and psychological-warfare programs. This has not been meant to minimize the role of common sense and experience in identifying, analyzing, and interpreting susceptibilities. To maximize the contribution of common sense observation, experience, and interpretation, on the contrary, area analysts were asked, in practice, to present detailed descriptive and narrative accounts of situations containing pertinent psychological reactions,* as indicated elsewhere; and the functional analyses and interpretations made therefrom by functional specialists were in turn submitted to them for final criticism or cooperative emendation. Such precautions, it is felt, brought dividends.

One continuing problem which is especially dependent upon experience and common sense, is the degree to which separate but related susceptibility chains are put together and considered part of a single susceptibility

* A package of these are in the files of D/IP.

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situation. In general the principle followed was one favoring separate rather than compounded chains. For it was thought that it would be easier to pull out of the file different sheets on a single topic, than to cut down and separate a group of related susceptibility chains put together on a single sheet.

In general, it need hardly be said, attempts were made to pool all the area knowledge, functional specialization, experience, and common sense of the teams working on the study -- so far as time permitted.

II. GENERAL DEVIATIONS FROM THE "SPECIFICATIONS"

Under section B of Tab A of the Chile report some comments were made on "Modifications Made Empirically in the Theoretical Framework." The present remarks are additional to or in amplification of the points made there, and in general follow the paging and order of the "Specifications."

A. Broad Differences and Positive Content

1. The "Specifications" (pp. 1-5) contemplated a study
 - a. as of certain times and circumstances in the future,
 - b. to be made in depth,
 - c. with three parts -- an introduction and summary, a treatment of physical accessibility, and a treatment of psychological accessibility.

The Chile study, on the other hand, differed on all these points. First, it concentrated on analysis of existing situations; and hence future times and circumstances are considered incidentally, if at all, in regard to any situation. Second, instead of a study in depth, obviously the Chile study is a reconnaissance one. Third, the kind of introduc-

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with the personnel and time available (see, however, assumptions
1-d indicated in I-A-1 above, and the Bibliography in Tab B of the Chile study, itself); and physical accessibility was not included in the request.

2. To obtain a more comprehensive view of the content of the Chile study, reference should be made to the contemplated scheme of analysis of "Psychological Accessibility" in "Specifications," page 5, section C. A summary of the country's psychological-susceptibility situations, called for in 1-(a) of section C is represented in the Chile study by Part II, except that no priorities are indicated.* The heart of the Chile study, namely, Part IV ("Packet of Individual Susceptibility Situations"), is called for in 2, of section C, "Presentation of Specific Psychological-Susceptibility Situations." Quite new and un-contemplated at the beginning of the Chile study is a topical outline of the problems found to be present in the susceptibility situations. This is given in Part III. Another new element is the orientation to the Chile study (offered as Part I, Introduction) presumed to be necessary to give the reader some idea of the new type of undertaking represented in this sort of country study. More technical aspects of it are taken up in Tab A. And Tab B, as indicated above, presents a bibliography of relevant State Department and CIA documents pertaining to the field.

* 1-(b) of Section C, referring to future times and circumstances, was omitted for reasons indicated above.

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B. The General Method

Apropos this aspect of the study it will probably be easier for the analyst if comment is continued upon the items serially presented in the "Specifications," page 7, section III, "Pertinent Concepts, Data, and Framework of Analysis."

1. Paragraphs 1-4 on preliminary definitions, were accepted as generally applicable in the study, though needing to be rewritten.
2. As to paragraph 5, the concept of "direct" and "indirect" susceptibility situations proved fundamental. The concept of "combined" situations (as indicated in section B of Tab A in the Chile study) did not prove especially meaningful because so many uncombined patterns were so easily capable of being expanded into combined ones. On the other hand, it seemed worthwhile to make a third category of divisive and unifying patterns.
3. The major components of susceptibility situations discussed in of section III paragraph 6 of the "Specifications," appeared to give way to classification in terms of (a) chief factors, (b) significant relationships, (c) qualifications of factors or relationships, (d) conditioning circumstances. The four chief factors originally envisaged as in paragraph 7 were retained in theory. The idea of check lists of three of the factors, discussed in paragraph 8, was felt to be still valid, although in the Chile study only an informal check list of groupings was attempted. Similarly, the general concept of qualifications presented in paragraphs 9 and 10 was felt to be valid, although only preliminary informal descriptive treatment of qualifications was attempted in the reconnaissance study itself, and then only in part of the situation.

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appeared to call for no radical revision. On the other hand, there is obvious need for critical and systematic consideration of the types of relationship which might well be borne in mind as possibly fruitful in any comprehensive country study.

C. The Form for the Analysis of the Individual Psychological Susceptibility Situation

Reference should be made to the new form listing 13 different items employed in the packet of filled-in forms constituting Part IV of the Chile study; and this should be compared with the form listing 16 items and instructions for its use, in Tab B of the "Specifications."

1. In general, the substantive and topical aspects of the Chile study which were developed inductively into Part III of the Chile report, are reflected in certain changes in the form employed. The new blank 5 on the form provides for the topical title of the psychological susceptibility situation, as used in the Outline in Part III. The new blank 6 gives the topical item(s), as was contemplated in the old Blank 6. In addition, a blank in the upper left-hand corner gives the location (precise number) of the title of the susceptibility situation in the topical Outline; and the blank in the upper right-hand corner calls for reference to the numbers of other situations (or sheets) in the topical Outline.

2. In contrast to this attention to substantive topics, the blanks referring to technical titles of susceptibility patterns are not filled in in the Chile study. The reconnaissance nature of the study prevented a careful critical re-examination of the technical pattern titles tentatively presented in Appendix V of the "Principles." Accordingly,

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3. Priorities called for in item 12 of the old form and item 11 of the new one, are not indicated because the initial area analysts were not ready to make decisions on them without (a) access to more detailed field data, and (b) more detailed and definitive policy statements for the information and psychological warfare program of the US Government aimed at Chile. (See similar position taken in the brief document entitled "The Methodological Framework for the Country-by-Country Studies in CIA's PW Project, from a Social Science Point of View," June 1950 (Confidential).)

4. And incidentally, blanks 1, 2, and 3 were left for use of the Requester; blanks 4 and 5 in the old form were combined into 4 in the new form; and blanks 15 and 16 of the old form are beyond the scope of the present reconnaissance study. Blank 10, dates of production and revisions, are of first importance, of course.

D. General Revision of "Specifications" and "Principles"

Some revision of these documents is undoubtedly needed. With regard to much of the "Principles," revision would need to wait upon further experience. However, the material on "qualifications" in several of the appendices, and the classifications and titling of patterns in Appendix V, call for further consideration at once. (See, e.g., p. 10, line 2 of "Specifications" for a revision then decided upon.)

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PILOT STUDY FOR GENERAL METHOD AND FOR TRAINING ANALYSTS

A. Alternations between Theoretical Objectives and Framework on the one hand, and Concrete, Substantive Facts on the other

It would be difficult to put too much emphasis on this point. A happy medium must be found between inductive study on the one hand, and the

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deliberate critical use of broad analytical concepts on the other. Without the latter and under the illusion of being inductive, the area analyst is not infrequently liable to couch his concrete matter uncritically in conceptual terms from miscellaneous sources, and to do it so continuously that the terms become habitual, and hence ruts of conceptualization. If these country studies are to be comparative, there seems no escape from the deliberate critical selection of broad concepts for comparative handling of the material. Emendations to such categorized materials must of course be made by both the area specialist and the functional specialist, but be done critically.

B. Specific Suggestions for Steps in Identifying and Analyzing Susceptibility Situations

1. At the first session between the area analyst(s) and the functional specialist or director, the area analyst(s) may well be introduced to the problem by being asked whether people in the country he is studying are discontented or dissatisfied in any way, whether they are angry or provoked on the one hand, or have strong enthusiasms, loyalties, likes, etc., -- on the assumption that these psychological reactions could be utilized or exploited in informational, persuasive, or propaganda programs by the US Government.
2. At a second session, after a presentation of the area analyst's findings on step 1, he should be requested to make up check lists on three subjects: one giving a comprehensive listing of the various kinds of psychological reactions of the people of the country such as those considered in step 1; a second giving groupings and personages of the country who feel, think, or react in such ways as those indicated

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in step 1; and a third check list giving the events, the conditions, the actions on the part of others which in general seem to have aroused the kinds of psychological reaction considered in step 1. The area analyst should make up his own check lists first, and only then, probably, should be directed to the suggestive check lists provided in Appendices II, III, and IV of the "Principles."

3. At the third session between the functional director of the project and the area analyst, attention should be focused upon the concept of the "chain" of factors elaborated in both the "Specifications" and the "Principles," centering, of course, on the group-reaction core. If available, a chart might be exhibited showing elaborations of this core in various ways, particularly with prefixes and suffixes. Samples should be distributed of several types of patterns (preferably from such actual study as the Chile one) presenting, first, just a group reaction; then a group reaction with suffixes to indicate it is directed toward some person, other group, or condition; and then further elaborations in the form of prefixes to indicate stimulating factors on the one hand, and suffixes to indicate implementation or expression of reactions on the other.

4. The fourth session might well be devoted to the discussion of qualifications of the factors and their relationships. A fifth session might be devoted to conditioning circumstances. And a sixth one to the important problem of indirect or potential patterns and chains.

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C. Additional Materials

1. It might be helpful, either at first or after several sessions, to give the analyst a summary statement of the total product desired in a somewhat theoretical form. (See I-C above.) It is assumed he would have access to "basic intelligence" of a psychological nature.
2. It might be a mistake, however, to show him the topical outline of a single country study until he has realized the importance of making his own topical outline inductively on the basis of the actual problems discovered in his own field.

D. Indoctrination and Check-up in General

The above suggestions grow, some directly and some indirectly, out of experience with the Chile study. The process used chiefly in it is indicated earlier (Tab A, section B of the Chile study, "Modifications Made Empirically in the Theoretical Framework"). However, various methods were attempted in one form or another at different times during the Chile study, and it is now felt that the procedure just outlined might well be worth careful trial. All through the process, however, a close check must be kept upon the area analyst, if the theoretical background and functional approach are new to him.

Even persons sufficiently trained in the social sciences including psychology, to be chosen as assistants to the functional director, were found to be liable to overlook the various pitfalls in such a study unless they gave very careful and continuing attention to the theoretical problems involved.

IV. RELATIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITIES

A. To the Drafting of Policies, "Tasks," and Themes for Informational and Psychological Warfare Programs

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1. Some analysts, particularly those who have been or are concerned with informational and propaganda programs, find it difficult to divorce themselves from the idea that an intelligence study can only be made with continual reference to US objectives and US propaganda themes. The terms of the present study excluded such references; as for instance in the request to report "psychological susceptibilities" of the people of a given country.
2. On the other hand, where US policies, activities, and propaganda themes have already come to the attention of groups in a given foreign country's population, the intelligence analyst is responsible for ascertaining what the reactions of these groups has been to such objectives and themes.
3. It would seem quite legitimate, moreover, to employ the indirect or potential type of pattern in postulating (if not predicting) reactions which certain population groups are likely to make to still other themes or policies. This was contemplated in "Principles." Appendix III, 3, "Present Expectations of Further Foreign or International Existence of Deprivation, Obstruction, or Attack." Obviously, where there are expectations of something which has not yet occurred, there are reactions to such hypothesized occurrences.
4. In general, however, the direct type of patterns should be quite thoroughly ascertained before venturing far with indirect ones. And on the whole the hypothetical introduction into the study, of themes and objectives to which population groups have not as yet reacted, should be made only as a last or added step to the kind of

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intelligence study here contemplated. Then it may be done for enemy propaganda as well as US or Allied propaganda.

B. To Collection Activities

It has been found, from both theoretical and practical viewpoints, that the materials available on psychological susceptibilities are quite inadequate. Field collection is radically needed. The devising of adequate outlines for such collection, however, is a task which should be undertaken with care and discrimination, and presumably after considerable experience in attempting such studies as the Chile one.